

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed June 14, 2004, Applicants submitted arguments that Anguilo et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,456,304, hereinafter "Anguilo") does not show or suggest the limitations recited in independent Claims 1, 9, 17 and 25. A Notice of Allowance acknowledging the allowability of independent Claims 1, 9, 17 and 25 (and their dependent claims) over Anguilo was mailed on January 4, 2005.

For the reasons below, Applicants respectfully submit that Choy et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,506,952; hereinafter "Choy") does not overcome the shortcomings of Anguilo, and that Choy alone or in combination with Anguilo does not show or suggested the limitations of Claims 1, 9, 17 and 25.

Applicants respectfully submit that "active" and "inactive," with regard to the states of a graphic element, are defined in the claims. That is, according to the claims, an element that is active initiates an action (in response to being selected by a user) while an element that is inactive does not initiate an action (in response to being selected by a user). With that claimed definition in mind, Applicants respectfully submit that the icons of Choy are neither active nor inactive. Choy only describes making icons less visible or more visible (e.g., they are grayed out or not). According to Choy, there is no relationship between the visibility of an icon and whether or not the icon is active or inactive.

Furthermore, Choy only describes icons that can be dragged or not dragged. "Selecting" according to Choy only constitutes dragging an icon

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from one location in a display to another. Selecting one of Choy's icons does not result in an action being initiated. Selecting one of Choy's icons does not result in activation of another icon. Although Choy uses the word "icon," Applicants respectfully submit that the icons of Choy cannot be equated with the graphic elements of the present claimed invention.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Choy (alone or in combination with Anguilo) does not show or suggest a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, where the method includes "rendering a plurality of graphic elements, wherein said graphic elements are visibly displayed regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said graphic elements are active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element in said plurality of graphic elements with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action; and activating a first portion of said graphic elements and deactivating a second portion of said graphic elements in response to user selection of said element with said element active" as recited in independent Claim 1.

Also, Applicants respectfully submit that Choy (alone or in combination with Anguilo) does not show or suggest a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, where the method includes "rendering a plurality of graphic elements ..., wherein said graphic elements are visibly displayed regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said graphic elements are active or inactive, wherein user

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selection of an element in said plurality of graphic elements with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action; and activating a first portion of said graphic elements and deactivating a second portion of said graphic elements in response to user selection of said element with said element active" as recited in independent Claim 9.

In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that Choy (alone or in combination with Anguilo) does not show or suggest a computer-usable medium that causes a computer system to perform a method of helping a user perform tasks in software, where the method includes "rendering a plurality of graphic elements, wherein said graphic elements are visibly displayed regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said graphic elements are active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element in said plurality of graphic elements with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action; and activating a first portion of said graphic elements and deactivating a second portion of said graphic elements in response to user selection of said element with said element active" as recited in independent Claim 17.

Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that Choy (alone or in combination with Anguilo) does not show or suggest a graphical user interface (GUI) for helping a user perform tasks in software, where the GUI includes "a plurality of graphic elements, wherein said graphic elements are

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visibly displayed regardless of which of said tasks is being performed and regardless of whether said graphic elements are active or inactive, wherein user selection of an element in said plurality of graphic elements with said element active initiates an action in response to said selection while user selection of said element with said element inactive does not initiate said action; and wherein a first portion of said graphic elements are activated and a second portion of said graphic elements are deactivated in response to user selection of said element with said element active" as recited in independent Claim 25.

Conclusions

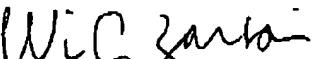
Based on the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request issuance of the present Application.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative if the Examiner believes such action would expedite resolution of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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